

The Senator from Kentucky also claimed that a nominee for a spot on the FEC has never been defeated on the floor, and that is true. But it is not true that the wishes of each of the parties has always been respected. In the mid-1980s, the Republican Party, under pressure from the National Right to Work Committee, blocked the reappointment of a Democratic Commissioner, Thomas Harris, because of his work as a lawyer representing unions. President Reagan refused to renominate Harris, and after a lengthy stalemate, another nominee was suggested.

So much of the argument in favor of this nominee today has been based on this notion that to try to stop an FEC nomination is a complete break with precedent, that we have to simply rubberstamp this pairing of two FEC commissioners. The reality is contrary to the suggestion earlier today, the party of the Senator from Kentucky has not always acquiesced in the choice of the Democratic Party for its seats on the commission.

Let me finally just dispel one misconception that I think some might have about the negotiations and agreements that led to this debate, which is clearly tied to various judicial and other nominations. There is no requirement here that Professor Smith's nomination be approved by the Senate in order for these other nominations to go forward. That is a misconception that some, particularly on our side, may believe. It is simply not the case with regard to the unanimous consent agreement and the negotiations between the majority leader and minority leader. In fact, it would be an abdication of our responsibility not to vote on the merits of this particular nominee regardless of the other nominations whose consideration was linked to the consideration of this nomination.

With that I reserve the remainder of my time and I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I ask the time be charged equally as I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, on behalf of the majority leader, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, Senator GRAMS quoted a letter to President

Clinton that I signed last year. He took this letter out of context. In supporting the public pension systems of state and local government workers, I called for the continuance of those plans—not for the creation of private, individual accounts.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, May 22, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,673,857,621,024.05 (Five trillion, six hundred seventy-three billion, eight hundred fifty-seven million, six hundred twenty-one thousand, twenty-four dollars and five cents).

Five years ago, May 22, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,883,843,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred eighty-three billion, eight hundred forty-three million).

Ten years ago, May 22, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,092,808,000,000 (Three trillion, ninety-two billion, eight hundred eight million).

Fifteen years ago, May 22, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,750,663,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred fifty billion, six hundred sixty-three million).

Twenty-five years ago, May 22, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$522,752,000,000 (Five hundred twenty-two billion, seven hundred fifty-two million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,151,105,621,024.05 (Five trillion, one hundred fifty-one billion, one hundred five million, six hundred twenty-one thousand, twenty-four dollars and five cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CELEBRATING THE NALC NATIONAL FOOD DRIVE

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, on the second Saturday of each May, letter carriers across the United States collect food donations on their postal routes to deliver to community food banks, shelters and pantries. I commend the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) for creating and sponsoring the largest one-day food drive in the country with over 100,000 letter carriers participating in more than 10,000 cities and towns.

Not only do America's postal workers perform an important function in our economy and in our daily lives, they make a difference in improving the lives of needy citizens. I extend my appreciation and thanks to NALC's leaders and members for their dedication and commitment to their strong tradition of community service.

The food drive started as small pilot program in 10 cities and, as a result of its huge success, was expanded nationwide. The program asks postal patrons to place a box or bag of food next to their mailboxes. The food is picked up, sorted at postal stations and then delivered to area food banks by letter carriers.

I am pleased to note that in my home state, the California State Association of Letter Carriers was among those state associations which donated the largest amount of food in the national drive. It is my hope that during the month of May and throughout the year, Americans will consider becoming involved in the NALC Food Drive and in other activities serving the less fortunate in our communities.●

ABC'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) as they approach their 50th Anniversary. ABC was founded by seven contractors in Baltimore, Maryland on June 1, 1950, and is today a national trade association representing over 22,000 contractors, subcontractors, material suppliers and related firms from across the country and from all specialties in the construction industry.

ABC is the construction industry's voice for merit shop (open shop) construction as ABC is the only national association devoted to the merit shop philosophy. Merit shop companies employ approximately 80 percent, or four out of five, of all American construction workers and seek to provide the best management techniques, the finest craftsmanship, and the most competitive bidding and pricing strategies in the industry. ABC believes that union and merit shop contractors and their employees should work together in harmony and that work should be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder regardless of labor affiliation.

I greatly appreciate ABC's commitment to developing a safe workplace and high-performance work force through quality education and training with comprehensive safety and health programs. I also appreciate ABC's dedicated efforts to secure free enterprise, fair and open competition, less government, more opportunities for jobs, tax relief, increased training, and the elimination of frivolous complaints and over-regulation.

Accordingly, I thank ABC for their efforts and wish them continued success in their efforts to ensure that the American construction industry continues to afford the finest work product and greatest opportunity in the world.●

LOCAL LEGACIES PROJECT

• Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a select few individuals from my home state of Montana. I have personally nominated these individuals to represent Montana in the Library of Congress' Local Legacies Project as part of their Bicentennial Celebration. The Local Legacies project has allowed citizens to participate directly in this great celebration. The participants have documented America's grassroots heritage in every state, the U.S. Trusts and Territories, and the District of Columbia. Their documentation provides